



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors  
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Los Angeles, California 90012

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Philip L. Browning, Director of Child Support Services presented a verbal report to the Board, as detailed in the attached report dated June 24, 2003, on various issues regarding the Department's informal case opening policy.

After discussion, no action was taken by the Board (Supervisors Yaroslavsky and Knabe being absent).

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Attachment

July 1, 2003

Report to  
Board Of Supervisors Meeting  
June 24, 2003

**Case Opening Policy**

**Opening Remarks**

As the Board is aware, Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department (CSSD) has recently been instructed by the State Department of Child Support Services to develop a plan to open all cases, which have not been opened previously.

Within the last year, the emphasis has been to locate assets and income for noncustodial parents even if it meant delaying the opening of a case. Identifying income and assets should produce more accurate orders and result in more collections for families instead of creating an order, which is higher than the Noncustodial parent can pay and for which no collections can be made.

The priorities in Los Angeles County have always been those prescribed by the State Child Support Department (DCSS). The priorities, last year included the Data Reliability Project, conversion of San Diego and Orange County's caseloads to ARS, the Duplicate Case Transfer Project, and the transformation from a law-enforcement model to customer service model. These non-federally mandated initiatives have diverted valuable resources away from vital areas within the department. These priorities, combined with diminishing personnel resources that continue to be diverted to a host of other activities, have prevented us from opening our new cases at a faster pace. As a result, a backlog of approximately 14,000 cases existed several weeks ago.

**Plan to meet the California Departments of Child Support Services' (DCSS) July 18, 2003 Deadline.**

The department has submitted a plan of action to DCSS outlining the corrective course of action relative to the case opening inventory. Each case will require approximately one caseworker hour to create on our automated system. Our plan to address this case opening inventory consist of the following steps:

- 1) *Each of our public divisions will add at least six caseworkers to its intake unit.*
- 2) *A central case opening operation will be established at our Commerce facility to work over flow cases from each division*
- 3) *Twenty-seven caseworkers will be reassigned to this central location.*
- 4) *Several programs (Locate Project and Manual Collection Project) will be temporarily suspended to make other staff resources available.*
- 5) *A total of 110 employees will be reassigned to this project*

**Impact on Employees and Divisions as other employees are reassigned to assist in clearing the backlog.**

We have worked to minimize the impact of assigning 110 staff from their current jobs to this new assignment but there may be some delays in the areas from where the 110 staff were assigned.

**Corrective action measures taken to assure that similar “informal policies” are not implemented which can jeopardize compliance with Federal Regulations.**

I have taken corrective action measures to assure that similar “informal policies” do not occur in the future. The Performance Review Unit will continue to monitor our inventories to assure compliance with Federal and State regulations. We will continue to use our Quality Assurance Performance Improvement monitoring process to help identify the levels of our inventories and referrals. My staff will continue to monitor, on a monthly basis, the number of referrals made and will continue to provide accurate reports to DCSS.

**Consequences to the Department by State and Federal Government.**

I am unaware of any monetary consequences as a result of CSSD not opening cases faster. The lack of financial and staff resources has caused the temporary backlog of opening new cases and has resulted in us not meeting the requirement to open cases in the prescribed time frame.

One positive consequence of taking more time to open cases is the possibility of establishing more accurate orders and identifying assets/income. A more accurate order should mean more satisfied customers, higher payment rates and more money for families and children.

**Concluding Remarks**

We are now attempting to spend more time on obtaining better income and employment data before opening cases so that we can establish more accurate orders in the long run. This does not, however, mean that we will open only those cases believed to result in successful child support collections.

I will continue to work with my staff, the State and the Board to insure that our corrective course of action remains on course. I will continue to monitor the progress of our inventory and I do expect to meet our July 18, 2003 deadline. As of 1 July 2003, there are approximately 3400 cases which need to be opened.

Philip Browning  
1 Jul 03